White-lined Sphinx Moth Abundant in Central Utah Spring 1949

While collecting at Cherry Creek and Topaz Mountain in Juab County, on May 27-30, 1949 with Drs. L. D. Pfoutz and C. Hopkins, I was impressed with the abundance of the adults of the white-lined sphinx moth, *Celerio lineata* (Fabr.). The moths were common at twilight, flying around the camp fire. Some of them came too close to the fire and got their wings singed. Several specimens were taken. In Provo I observed adults of this sphinx in the flower gardens as early as April 30 this year. Several people called to report this fact and to find out if some of the large females were not humming-birds.

These moths laid their eggs, which have hatched into larvae, and are now, June 18, about 70 to 88 mm in length. The larvae are feeding on the Mustard *Norta altissima* (L) and Knotweed, *Polygonum sawatchense* Small and many other plants along the foothills east of Provo, and in Cedar Valley west of Utah Lake.

People have noticed them and wondered if they would move into their fields and damage the crops. This will probably not happen since the majority of the larvae are mature, and will soon pupate in the ground. There are two broods in a year, hence these larvae, which pupate, will after a few weeks hatch into moths. Mr. Ivan Sack, supervisor of the Uinta forest, with offices in Provo, accompanied the writer along the fire break east of Provo; here we observed a mighty hord of green blackish stripped larvae consuming the plants of the foot hills, principally those plants listed above.

This outburst in numbers of the white-lined sphinx is probably the result of several years of increase in its population which has now resulted in producing the enormous numbers of larvae as recorded here. Natural biological control will, no doubt, reduce the population in subsequent years. Here is a good example of the increase and decline of numbers within an insect species. The pages of biological literature are replete with examples of the upsurge in numbers of individuals of many species. Likewise the decline from the peak increase is also a part of the recorded data. The available food, along with the parasites and enemies, will ultimately limit the increase of any animal.—Vasco M. Tanner.